

Remarks

Reconsideration and reexamination of the above-identified patent application, as amended, are respectfully requested. Claims 1, 3-15, 17-20, and 22-30 are pending in this application upon entry of this Amendment. In this Amendment, the Applicant has amended claims 1, 3-5, 11, 14, and 17; and cancelled claims 2, 16, and 21. No claims have been added in this Amendment. Of the pending claims, claims 1, 4-5, 11, 14, and 22-23 are independent claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicated that claims 22-30 are allowed.

The Examiner indicated that claims 2-5, 11, and 16-17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 2 depends directly from independent claim 1. The Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2. Claims 6-10 and 12-13 depend from amended independent claim 1 and include the limitations therein. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 6-10, and 12-13, as amended, are in a condition for allowance.

Claim 4 depends directly from independent claim 1. The Applicant has rewritten claim 4 in independent form including the limitations of independent claim 1. Thus, amended independent claim 4 is in a condition for allowance.

Claim 5 depends directly from independent claim 1. The Applicant has rewritten claim 5 in independent form including the limitations of independent claim 1. Thus, amended independent claim 5 is in a condition for allowance.

Claim 11 depends directly from independent claim 1. The Applicant has rewritten claim 11 in independent form to include the limitations of independent claim 1. Accordingly, amended independent claim 11 is in a condition for allowance.

Claim 16 depends directly from independent claim 14. The Applicant has amended independent claim 14 to include the limitations of claim 16. Claims 15 and 17-20, as amended, depend from amended independent claim 14. Accordingly, claims 14-15 and 17-20 are in a condition for allowance.

Double Patenting

The Examiner rejected claims 1-30 on the ground of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-27 of U.S. Patent No. 6,682,507. The Applicant has filed herewith a Terminal Disclaimer in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.321(c) in order to overcome the double patenting rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 7-8, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,525,719 issued to Lessing, Jr. ("Lessing"). As indicated above, claims 1, 7-8, and 13, as amended, are in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claims 1, 7-8, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 6 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lessing in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,472,369 issued to Schuster ("Schuster"). As indicated above, claims 6 and 12 are in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claims 6 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Examiner rejected claims 9-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lessing in view of EP 0807449 issued to Vogel ("Vogel"). As indicated above, claims 9-10 are in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claims 9-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Examiner rejected claims 14, 19, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lessing in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,671,983 issued to Miller et al. ("Miller"). Claim 21 has been cancelled. As indicated above, claims 14 and 19, as amended, are in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claims 14 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Examiner rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lessing in view of Miller and further in view of Vogel. As indicated above, claim 15 is in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Examiner rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lessing and Miller and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,853,396 issued to Bennes. As indicated above, claim 18 is in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The Examiner rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lessing and Miller and further in view of Schuster. As indicated above, claim 20 is in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

In summary, claims 1, 3-15, 17-20, and 22-30, as amended, meet the substantive requirements for patentability. The case is in appropriate condition for allowance. Accordingly, such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone or video conference would expedite allowance or resolve any further questions, such a conference is invited at the convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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